



Last Thursday, I was sworn in to the 113th Congress as Nebraska's First Congressional District Representative in the United States House of Representatives. Having taken the oath of office before, I was reminded again of the solemnity and privilege of serving in public office.

The swearing-in ceremony is an extraordinary moment. There is excitement and energy surrounding the occasion as, in a certain sense, the citizens of America renew the commitment — through their representatives — to the ideals of self-governance. According to the rules of the House, younger children of Members of Congress are invited to join the ceremony on the floor of the House Chamber. I was very pleased to have two of my daughters, Christine and Caroline, accompany me. Each Member is called upon by name to vote by voice for their choice of Speaker of the House. Then all Members with hand raised are led by the newly elected Speaker of the House in the oath of office:

*"I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."*

In swearing an oath, a person commits by virtue of their integrity to the highest level of obligation and duty. While Congress must immediately get to work on pressing issues of

economic and national security, we appropriately pause to reconnect with our foundational traditions and that which binds us as a people.

My service in the 113th Congress will present new opportunities. In November, I was selected by my colleagues to serve on the House Appropriations Committee. In doing so, I must forego positions on the House Agriculture and Foreign Affairs Committees. This is not an easy transition, as my office over recent years has focused a great deal of work on promoting new agricultural opportunity in rural America and strengthening our national security posture around the world. The Appropriations assignment, though, presents new opportunities for constructive work on behalf of Nebraska and the security of America.

The House Appropriations Committee writes the policies authorizing all expenditures made by the U.S. government. Members are tasked with the hard job of meeting the obligations of the federal government while also reducing the deficit through balanced spending and oversight decisions. This work is difficult, particularly with our country's current budgetary issues and fiscal situation.

Members of the Appropriations Committee, and all Members of Congress, must work together to reform the way our government spends. We must stop overspending and reduce the debt in order to restore our nation's economic strength. These reforms won't be easy, and they will require bold resolve and a willingness to think creatively, but I am pleased to be entrusted with this important responsibility and eager to begin the work of this new Congress.

As always, I invite you to keep in touch with me throughout the year. Please contact me via my website at <http://fortenberry.house.gov> , or keep in touch by "liking" my Facebook page ( [JeffFortenberry](#) ) and following me on Twitter ( [@JeffFortenberry](#) ). I look forward to serving you!